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ART, ADVERTISING & U.S. JAPAN RELATIONS

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LECTURE NOTES

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It all started a little over 38 years ago back in 1982... a secret place I'd like to go.

The Christmas gift book, 2nd grade.

National Geographic. The Living Treasures of Japan. A shot in Osaka. Pinks & Purples... that was it!

Brief Introduction - 20 years of experience.

A brief overview of the three parts ADVERTISING, ART & US/JAPAN RELATIONS

You'll be hit with a lot of information, coming at you from all directions. The purpose is to put you in a flow state. It's not about me, it's about you.

"Come with me and you'll be in a world of our imagination!" How's that song go?

PART ONE - ADVERTISING

Perspective 1 - Never say "be creative" to a creative, always have a direction and intention. Everything needs to tell a story, period.

(Krzysztof Kieślowski Three Colors Trilogy- every frame needs to inform and have momentum)

Perspective 2 - Understanding marketing: In 2007 I got into game theory and then particle theory. Brian Green's The Fabric of the Cosmos. Probability Theory (particles) as applied to Marketing & Advertising. (The bell curve.)

Before we talk about Advertising... Let's talk about Advertising's slicker "salesman of the year award winner" Marketing... which has been discussed for decades... the first thing people want to know.... what kind do you need?

- In the late 90s Seth Godin (Yahoo!) Permission Marketing "Shape their message so that consumers will willingly accept it"
- By 2004, Alex Wipperfurth's Brand Hijack: Marketing Without Marketing "weaponizing consumer-driven, or word-of-mouth, branding"
- Late's 2000s, Christopher Locke's Gonzo Marketing: Winning Through Worst Practices (the last chapter)
- Early 10s - W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne discussed Blue Ocean Strategy "Uncontested Market Space"
- People like Gary Vaynerchuk they have a great idea every five seconds

And then, the worry that maybe we missed out on the golden age of Advertising & Marketing?

{{{SLIDES}}}

In 1999, The End of Marketing as We Know it by Sergio Zyman (Disruption)

In 2019, The End of Marketing by Carlos Gil " Humanizing Your Brand in the Age of Social Media and AI"

My suggestion... In 2039, you can write ebook...

(Optional: Parlor Trick: The Last Jedi, Last BoyScout, Last Samuuri)

85% of the marketing books out there say the same thing...

1) You have to humanize your advertising, the old institutional system doesn't work anymore.

2) Why? Because people get wise easily so you have to come up with a new bag of tricks that seem more relatable.

You still need to read the books to know what level you're playing on...

The best advertising & marketing people do two things really well... Break thru Biases and implement Reinvention Techniques

{{{SLIDE}}}

How? By using the dynamics of the The Knowledge Quadrant and look for Unknown Unknowns - It's a SpaceTime Problem

AND by rooting the brand Back to Basics: 2 out of 3 Quality, Service & Price (knowledge & atmosphere/ ambiance) 3 out of 5.

Why is this so hard to comprehend? What bothers me the most: Why aren't marketing books in the same section as advertising & graphic design books? (Talk about electronics company in 2013, combing through search terms, the bottom 100... "bluetooth tv" making that actionable by putting a how-to section on the front page, 25% increase in sales within a month.)

After 20 years... 5 RULES OF THE AD GAME (AND MAYBE LIFE IN GENERAL)

RULE 1 - The look (the essence, the lovemark) comes first. It's the foundation! Behavioral economics is more important that we realize.

1) Good art, good creativity, emotional connection to the brand IS THE FOUNDATION, cuts through a lot of the calculation. At least, the odds are better for success. Trust is more easily obtained.

- You can lead a horse to a dirty, dingy pond or an oasis with horses in towels at the sauna sipping wine spritzers.

- A lot of creative ad people would rather be doing art and not your advertising.

2) The BEST graphic design utilizes the concept of analogy. The visuals perform as an analogy to the relationship to the user experience

- The mood of your advertising needs to be analogous the customer experience with your brand. (Taco Bell failure, and the "cool" 90s in general)

OOPS! Too much focus on the mathematics, the tools, the data gathering, the system, the pipeline and not enough on art, creative & genuine inspiration.

- Attract the customers you want, push away the ones you don't want (Octoberfest 2000)

MAIN POINT - We think in Analogies - Douglas Hofstadter

Analogies are a comparison between two things, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification.

"How many Kurosawa's do we have in the audience today?" "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get."

A good analogy is most efficient way to establish meaning. Packaging together context in a streamlined delivery system. Feels like magic.

RULE 2 - Using the wrong tools for the wrong purposes. (What do you need a website for?) Think in terms of deliverables, which I have from living in the midwest. Talking art and conceptual advertising is like talking about a dream you had three days ago.

Is this a brochure (here, you throw this out)

In my art career, have the idea first, then choose the best medium to execute that idea.

Advertising is like the casino, don't spend it if you can't afford to lose it.

(Back in the late aughts 00s.... Misused Google Adwords bankrupted some Seattle businesses. Not everyone is a giant conglomerate.)

RULE 3 - Beware of promises of going viral. Viral is hard to obtain.... Remember the "if you build it they will come" folly of the dot com bust or promises of 1st page on Google!

What goes viral? It has to excel in four ways... Insightful, hilarious, inspirational or controversial.

INSPIRATIONAL is where lovemarks find superfans...

The concept behind Lovemarks (2004) by Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi.

What kills the potential of going viral? Hedging your bets, afraid of offending, regression toward the mean, that gives you bland brands.

It's instinctive... people don't like to lose (The \$20 dollar bill raffle.) The quote in Moneyball, "I hate losing more than I like winning."

Two stories: The daughter of the Carpet Cleaners war at the Daily Southtown & Boojazz's "Mall Portraits are for Losers"

How to overcome this issue.... PRO TIP: Managing expectations is ESSENTIAL, both internally an externally

There are no silver bullets, there are no absolutes, advertising is ongoing. It's a process, it's a process...

(Think flow state & probability)

(High performing/ Low performing ads - Google Adwords pruning example)

Marketing and advertising is a conversation you're having with your clients, new and existing.

Internally, you have to fight the wall of confirmation bias... the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that affirms one's prior beliefs. It helps to be older... they listen more when you're in your 40s than your 20s.

RULE 4 - Time isn't Money... It is FAR more important than Money (a.k.a the never-ending battle of avoiding Knuckleheaded stuff)

In the end, what makes money (the point of sale), everything revolves around that, no matter how large the business is.

NOT TO SHORTCUT, NOT TO SQUEEZE PENNIES! It's easy to be sidetracked into time traps.

In small business these divergent paths kill your bottom line, and in corporations bad project management leads to dead-space which kills your soul and productivity.

Problems with Project Management - Design Thinking (Empathy)

Empathy counters Optimism Bias in planning which is a Critical Flaw

- Daniel Kahneman's Thinking Fast & Slow

Use Persona 5 Movie Project as an example - starts with the screenplay NOPE!

You need to plan before the screenplay.

(Personal experience, a web design project... "I know, let's add a booking/registration system.")

RULE 5 - AS OF 2021 DATA CAN'T SOLVE EVERYTHING - THE MOVIE MONEYBALL LIED TO US!

KEEP IN MIND - Data isn't being used properly - 95% of companies don't do it right AND data can be interpreted in many ways depending on how close you look at it.

Don't believe me? Sometimes the algorithms get it wrong...

Use Music as an example - Here are some other bands you like (Tiny Dancer / Almost Famous)

{{{SLIDES}}}

The Pia Fries dilemma.

BUT WHY IS CONTEXT HARD? The Psychology behind the science

- Not Calculating an infinite amount of nuances...

- Malcolm Gladwell's bestseller Blink, can you trust your gut instincts?

(People are happier with decision when decisions are made quicker.)

What is the timeframe people choose your product or service?

- We live in 6 different time zones - Philip Zimbardo - Time Perspective Theory

Douglas Hofstadter and the concept of CHUNKING

The AirPort Example (Tokyo) Large concepts are chunked together with smaller concepts.

Explain Instagram to a 12th century Samurai...

SIDE NOTE: The web is full of content, but not a lot of context... embedding context is what's next (reference notes)

- Youtube is now citing the origins of videos from news sources
- Once was Location, Location, Location... now it's Credibility, Credibility, Credibility

THE BOTTOM LINE: Good art, good creativity and inspiration gets you ahead of the curve. At least, the odds are better. Trust is more easily obtained.

**** The BEST design utilizes the concept of analogy. The visuals perform as an analogy to the relationship to the user experience.

If you don't feel something, you won't do something - "You are the product. You feeling something. That's what sells." - Don Draper

Example 1 - Aptude Website as an Example - from technical to artistic

Example 2 - <https://tolleson.com/work/stonemill-matcha-brand-launch/>

(ANALOGY VISUALS - WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT???)

Example 3 - R/GA Front Page (Brands for a HUMAN Future)

OPTIONAL Example 4 - The iPad box (and the Apple I movement).

It's all about I.... And it's a GATEWAY to ACCESS

Sidenote: What happened to Sixth Sense technology? "wearable gestural interface"

Pranav Mistry 2009-2010

He's now at <https://neon.life/> creating artificial AI people.

Rohit wanted me to address: The Key to Understanding Americans - We can't really figure ourselves out...

- Quote Colin Quinn "In New York it's rude to ask questions."
- We are NOT all alike. (There's several different countries in our country.) Definitely two... and you don't wear a suit in Seattle.
- Generalizations: Americans like to close, the sale, the handshake. Long term goals are important to Japanese. Meetings are not where decisions are made, just finalized. There's more of a hierarchy system in Japan. In America, it's there... but not as clearly defined.

GETTING AHEAD: Exploring the Differences between our two cultures

- How Language Shapes Thought - Lera Boroditsky (Watashi vs. I)

MAIN POINT - We think in analogies - Douglas Hofstadter

- This is why when three different people hear a politician speak, you get three different takes on the same speech.

Final food for thought: Always remember, for some it's all about the price/deal, for others it's about the relationship/trust quality and service. In another culture, it's harder to read the room.

PART TWO - MODERN ART & JAPANESE CULTURE

The state of Modern Art in December 2019 - A Banana in Art Basel

{{{SLIDES}}}

The Problem with Modern Art - The shock outweighs the craftsmanship... and It drives artists crazy (apologizing for the radical faction)

Nothing new- Dread Scott / School of the Art Institute Student (1989) -

"What Is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?"

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman - System 1 vs. System 2 Thinking (Tipping Point)

"I prefer my audiences stirred. Not shaken."

Shock art fades into obscurity, the real art, the powerful stuff has staying power.

{{{SLIDES}}}

Modern Art & Culture stirs the imagination, and can be a precursor to future advertising (think Andy Warhol, Jim Henson, Takashi Murakami)

The rise of the Virtual spokesperson - Lightning driving a Nissan.

SIDE NOTE ON WARHOL: Not a soup can fan, but the Marilyn Monroe piece at the Tate...

Where to begin (hint: it's not Pinterest, you need a curator)

- Vitamin P1, 2 & 3: New Perspectives in Painting
- Google's Arts & Crafts App
- MoMa's Primary Documents Book of Observations and Essays: From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan 1945-1989 (2014)

Besides inspiration: What can you do? Bringing art to the masses.

On a business level - Turning your space into a part time art gallery (lots of benefits, brand, awareness, productivity) Batavia architect office events.

Trendspotting - Counterculture - Turbulent Times Ahead - 2020s trial times

Recent turmoil in America, we look to others for solace.

Things to consider...

- Paint splats, handwriting and organic textures - real - authentic - handcrafted textural websites
- In America, the Rise of Generation Z - Children of X and rise of the weirdos (Kendrick Lamar, Savages, Wednesday Campanella now Billie Eilish, Idles, The Weeknd, Aya Gloomy, BiSH)
- Once a bubble gum coated "game of likes" in the 2010s, now it's different. (1960's, 1990's, 2020's)
- Credibility / keeping it real / don't sell out... is key for 2030 (refer to manifestos of Japanese artists post WWII)

Western Culture Example: Bond vs. Bourne in a post 9/11 world

Results... websites might become theatrical/emotional/inspiring focused again (from flash to HTML 5)

- The end of the so-called YouTube sudo-expert.
- Further refinement of content presentation, lighting and delivery. (Production values.)
- The fight against Deep Fakes (which will in turn push a need for authenticity)

Now... I don't have kids, we have cool friends with kids... the cool kids like Anime
(a Gateway to counter-culture)

WHERE JAPANESE CULTURE CAN BREAKTHROUGH

Archipel's Documentary Ebb and Flow: The resurgence of Japanese Games - Competition in the middle space (not blockbusters, not tiny scale indie)

- Games like Persona 5, Nier Automata, Gravity Rush 2 (Gravity Daze 2) found success with this method

There is precedent for attacking the mid-level - 1990s Mid-Budget Independent Films (now Netflix's competitive advantage)

The rise of Kpop and Kdrama - Jalt and Jcinema can be next (Hirokazu Kore-eda, Shinsuke Sato & Makoto Shinkai leads the charge) Alice in Borderland is a hit... so was Terrace House until the heartbreaking death of Hana Kimura. Two completely different shows.

Video game movies take the lead (lots of existing JRPG and anime franchises) My failed 2020 talk....

- Personal experience, started to deep-dive in Japanese culture in 2017.
- Youtube videos of Americans living in Japan, commercials, walkthroughs, people are inspired by the respect and organization

Ghosts of Tsushima - An Example of Success

1) Ghosts of Tsushima is Sucker Punch's (an American first-party video game developer) fastest-selling first party original PS4 game with more than 5 million copies sold since its debut in July 2020.

2) Kurosawa mode - black & white with Japanese dialog.

3) Ghost of Tsushima fans come together to help crowdfund repairs to typhoon-hit island including the Watatsumi Shrine gate featured in the game.

SIDE NOTE: Cool Japan (Aim that program towards business leaders)

As for cool.... Anime IS part of the subculture in America. Japan has less of an issue with cultural adaptation/ people interested in / and relating to the culture. Japan likes to share its culture.

And it's not "soft power" it's embedding your ideals to another culture. It's hearts and minds...

PART THREE - US/JAPAN RELATIONS

Read from The Declaration of Interdependence Manifesto

The elephant in the room... The US - We Saw it Coming from Decades Away

- Network (1977) Infotainment as the standard
- Neil Postman's "Amusing Ourselves to Death" (1985)
- His argument - "form excludes the content", that is, a particular medium can only sustain a particular level of ideas.
- Michael Medved's - Hollywood vs America (1992)
- Being Digital by Nicholas Negroponte (1995) The value of bits vs. atoms
- The Cluetrain Manifesto (1999) by Rick Levine, Christopher Locke, Doc Searls, and David Weinberger. - The community thread as power
- Chrystia Freeland's "Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super Rich and the Fall of Everyone Else" (2012)

Just the beginning... Turbulent Times Ahead - Geopolitically speaking

The real no fun part of this talk: The real possibility of a global major economic collapse/reorder in the 2020s

Chicago Council on Global Affairs & CSIS Center for Strategic & International's Studies Report: China's Rise Stratfor, Peter Zeihan - and/or Fall - Still the Same problem

What's wrong with China...

- West is Pulling Away From the Global Order (problematic for China's trade and export base economy)
- China is currently the most over credited (private credit) country in human history.
(Think Enron, but a country.)
- Average wage in China has skyrocketed by an 11 fold increase in the last 20 years,
no longer competitive
- Demographic situation is terminal (one child policy), no young people, no consumption led
economy, aged past the point of recovery
- Most of China's imported oil travels a great distance along a path littered with threats and rivals.
- PROOF: Experiencing a Car-Crunch (most people by first car in their 20s, they have 40% fewer 20
somethings than 30 somethings.
- A race for the Chinese Communist Party to lock down the country (see Hong Kong)
- China's navy may have a lot of vessels, but only a tenth of them have the capacity to sail more than 1000
miles from port.

Fix the problems or fight... Won't start a fight with US or Japan... but Taiwan.... Regardless it's chaos.

Russia is next... smaller European Countries... ouch. This isn't going to be fun, watching hundreds of
thousands of people suffer and die on our 4k wide screen televisions.

The five left standing: US (Canada/Mexico), Japan, France, Argentina, Turkey (as the US pulls from the
world order & the rise of populism... these countries a combination of self-sustaining without the order,
geographical advantages & innovation)

Why Japan? Innovation & robotics leader, no hostile countries on the border (island), harmonious and cohesive culture, talk of bringing in young people from the Philippines... you have time to pivot as needed.

Pull back to something better...

It will be important for Japan to reach out and gain cultural ground post-Olympics and Covid-19. (Return of Investment)

{{{SLIDES}}} Three flags from democratic countries

- Japanese Flag - Land of the Rising Sun - Emperor is said to be the direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu

- American Flag - Started with 13, we now have 50.... The meaning is... consumerism??

- The French Flag as a role model for democracy - Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood (Three Colors Trilogy - Optional: Bottle Scene)

- In short, America leans way too heavily on Liberty, Japan on Brotherhood - more cross cultural exchanges can lead to equilibrium.

(Mention the scribbled on a napkin vs the detailed Excel sheet from last week.)

Some easy ideas to get started...

- For Japanese, look to American go-between consultants (Kasia Lynch @ Ikigai Connections) or listen to the Business Karaoke Podcast

But be wary of organizations, do your research, most just give you a pat on the head or have ulterior motives.

- Location, Location, Location: Mitsuwa & Japanese companies in Western Chicago I-90 (Arlington Heights & Schaumburg)

- Empty malls could become cultural shopping centers (because you don't know what you're looking for) The Mall of India in Naperville

The success of Mitsuwa... why? Because it's introducing an unknown unknown in 4 dimensional space.

"You don't know, now you know." - The Notorious B.I.G.

Further Cultural Integration Ideas...

- The Cherry Coke\$ for St. Patrick's Day in Chicago

- Japanese Baseball Teams in Video Games

- More Cherry Blossom festivals at arboretums

- Interior Designers... introducing Japanese minimalist/linear concepts (Marie Kondo)

- There's already dozens of anime festivals... (reimagine those a bit)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (Back to pop culture as a visual language)

FINAL STATEMENT: An intermingling of cultural ideas puts members of both cultures within a shared special club that can change the course of both societies and in a world becoming more unstable and populist, we need buddies we can rely on.

In closing, back to 1982 and my grandmother.

PART FOUR (OPTIONAL) - A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO JAPANESE CULTURE

FILMS

Seven Samurai (1954) The film invented the "assemble the team" genre
Rashomon (1950), Yojimbo (1961) and Sanjuro (1962), The Hidden Fortress (1958)
"source of Star Wars", Ikiru (1952), Drunken Angel (1948) - Toshiro Mifune
Yasujiro Ozu's collection & Tokyo Story (1953)
Kenji Mizoguchi's cautionary tale Ugetsu (1953)
Toshiya Fujita's Lady Snowblood (1973) - Meiko Kaji
Tokyo Drifter (1966) and Branded to Kill (1967) directed by Seijun Suzuki
Kô Nakahira's Crazy Fruit (1956)
Nobuhiko Obayashi's off-the-rails horror comedy House (1977).
Kinji Fukasaku's Battle Royale (2000) "The Hunger Games"
Sion Sono's work
Love and Other Cults (2017) directed by Eiji Uchida.
Hiroyasu Kore-eda - Shoplifters (2018), Still Walking (2008) (The future of JCinema)
Abbas Kiarostami's Like Someone in Love (2012)

ANIME

Makoto Shinkai's Your Name (2016)
A Silent Voice (2016)
mini-series Erased (2016)

MUSIC

Babymetal, Band-Maid
Chai, Wednesday Campanella, Aya Gloomly, Glim Spanky, Akkogorilla
Luminous Orange, Dive (JPN), For Tracy Hyde, Anyo
Mondo Grosso, Daoko, Kaho Nakamura, DYGL, Domico, Denims, Tendre
Hatsune Miku performing "live" with Kodō

BOOKS

Haruki Murakami. The Wind Up Bird Chronicle (1997) and Kafka on the Shore (2004)
Moshi Moshi (2010) by Banana Yoshimoto -also Kitchen (1988) and Goodbye Tsugumi (1989)
Strange Weather in Tokyo (2001) by Hiromi Kawakami
*****Pure Invention: How Japan's Pop Culture Conquered the World (2020) by Matt Alt**

ART

Hiroshige
Yayoi Kusama, Takashi Murakami, Yoshitomo Nara,
designer Kenya Hara Designing Japan: A Future Built on Aesthetics (2018)



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